

"What was it about?"

Supporting Text Retelling and Response

Pronouncing the words on a page is only one component of reading. Good readers also talk about what they read with other people, requiring not only text comprehension, but also the ability summarize and improvise with language used in books.

In this webinar, we will:

- examine the importance of scaffolding techniques in post-reading tasks and showcase a tool, the story retelling wheel, which supports learners while giving them chances to be creative and take ownership of their reading
- explore how the story wheel can also be modified for different learner age groups, language proficiencies, learning goals, and text genres



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Lottie Baker



Lottie is the Regional English Language Officer for the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, currently based in Washington, D.C. Her portfolio includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine.

Previously, she served as the Regional Program Officer for Sub-Saharan Africa. Before joining the U.S. Department of State, Lottie was an Assistant Professor at the George Washington University (GW), where she administered graduate programs in language teacher education, taught classes for new teachers, and conducted applied research. She also has experience as an English Language Fellow and Specialist in Southeast Asia. Lottie began her career as a U.S. public school ESL teacher for young learners, and she holds degrees in English and Education from the University of Virginia and a Doctorate in Education from GW.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



"What was it about?"

Supporting Text Retelling and Response



© 2022 by Lottie Baker. *"What was it about?" Supporting Text Retelling and Response* for the American English Live Teacher Professional Development Series, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. government and administered by FHI 360. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License, except where noted. To view a copy of the license, visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



When you see this symbol, you will answer a question in the chat. Let's try...

Write in the chat box:

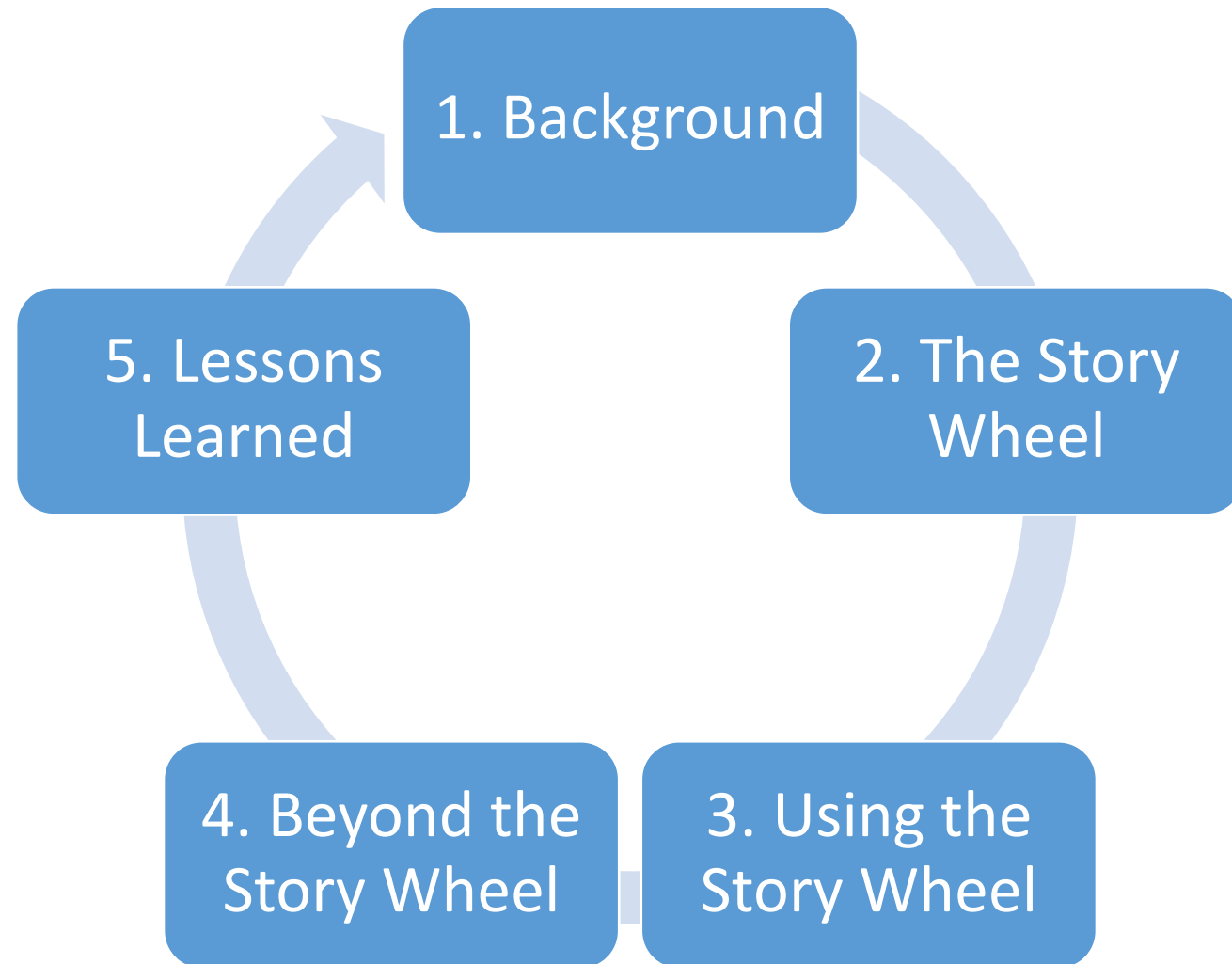
- 1. Where do you live?**
- 2. Who are your students?**

Goals

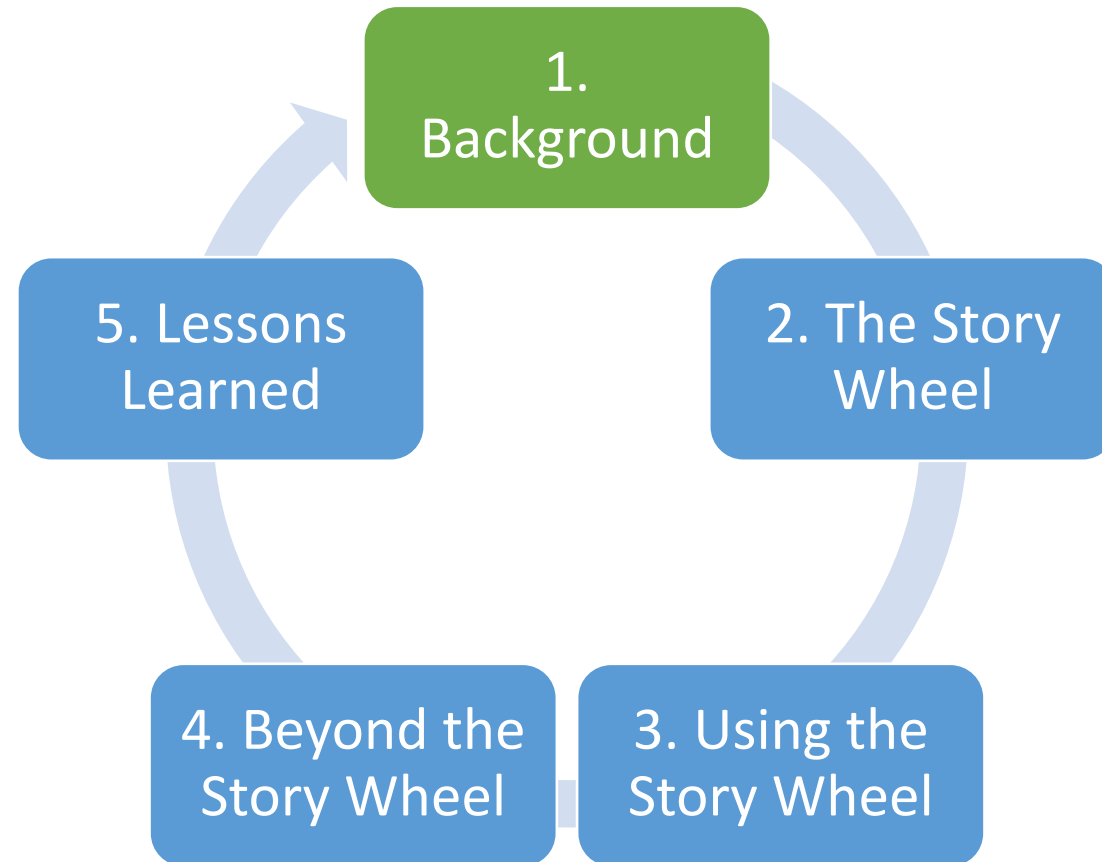
We will...

- Understand the benefits of post-reading activities.
- Learn how to create and use one post-reading activity: retelling story wheel.
- Identify adaptations for using the story wheel.
- Discuss best practices for using the story wheel.

Today's Webinar Wheel



Part 1 – Background: Theory behind the Story Wheel



Story Genre

A story is a true or fictional sequence of events with a beginning, middle, and end.



**What is a story that
you use when
teaching?**



What do we do when we finish a story?

- Recommend it to a friend
- Read a related book
- Discuss with a group (book club)
- Look up more information about an event in the story
- Read about the author



What happens when we read

Reading research shows that we understand better when we *do* something with the information we read.



**Post-Reading Activities are
what students do in the classroom
after they read a story.**

**Pre-Reading
Activities**



**Post-Reading
Activities**

Examples of Post-Reading Activities

- Discuss the plot with classmates
- Answer questions about the text
- Draw illustrations
- Perform a scene (Readers' theater)
- Complete a graphic organizer
- Compose a creative writing piece
- Read a related text



Post-Reading Activities

Questions & Discussion

- *What was your favorite part?*
- *Why did the main character get upset?*
- *What would you have done if you were there?*

Readers' Theater



Students take on roles and perform the ending scene.

Creative Writing



Write a letter to one of the characters.
What advice would you give him or her?

Related Story

Read a similar story written by another author.
Compare and contrast the events.





What is a post-reading strategy that you have used?

Post-reading activities in an L2

- Challenge is not just comprehension
- New vocabulary, new sentence structures, cultural references
- Oral and written language may not be the same
- One solution...

Scaffolding = a temporary support for learners to succeed in a task that they cannot yet do independently.



Story Wheels can Teach Story Language



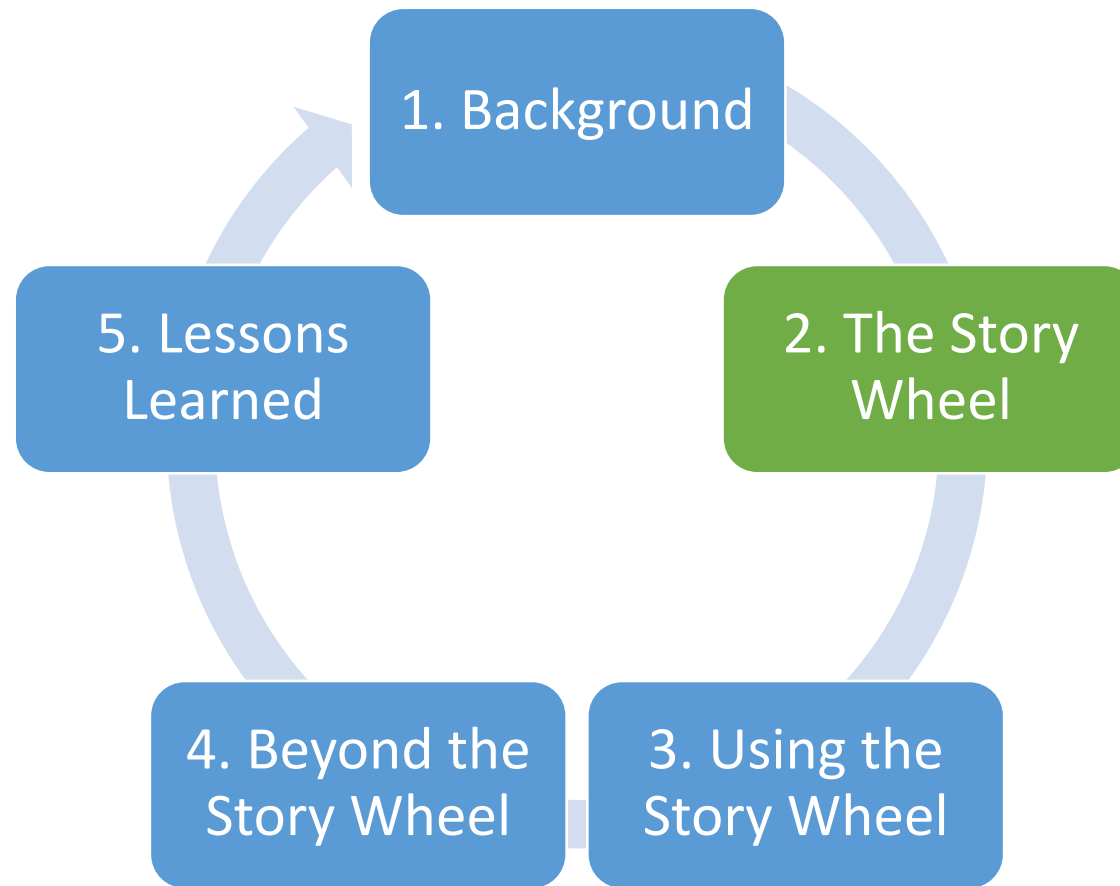
What are examples of story language?

The Language of Stories

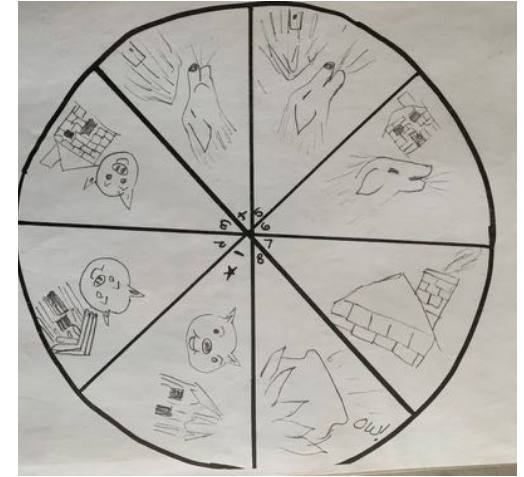
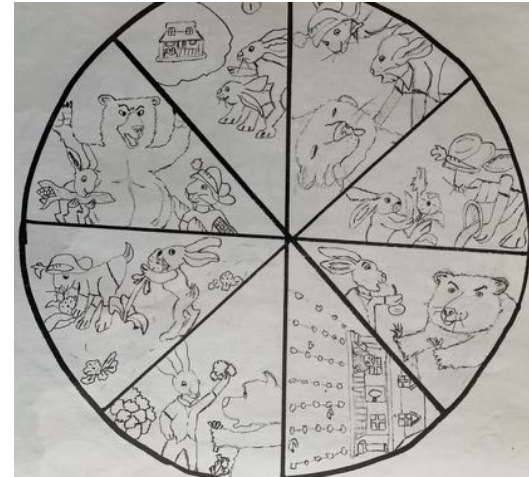
- ❑ Vocabulary that names objects or events specific to the story
- ❑ Descriptive verbs (e.g., *tiptoed* vs. *walked*) and adjectives
- ❑ Narrative stock phrases (e.g., *once upon a time*)
- ❑ Transition words (e.g., *first, then, next, finally*)
- ❑ Language used to talk *about* stories (e.g., *plot, characters*)

We acquire new language by using it over and over again.
The story wheel gives students opportunities to 'rehearse' the
language of stories.

Part 2 – The Retelling Story Wheel



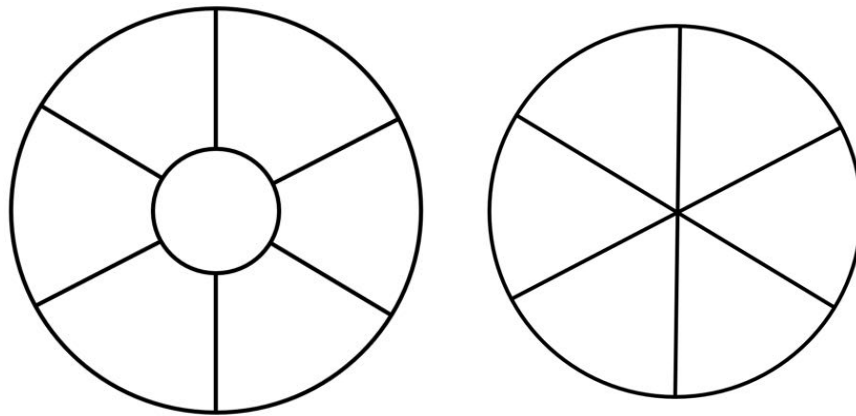
Retelling Story Wheel: Some Examples



You don't need to be an artist!

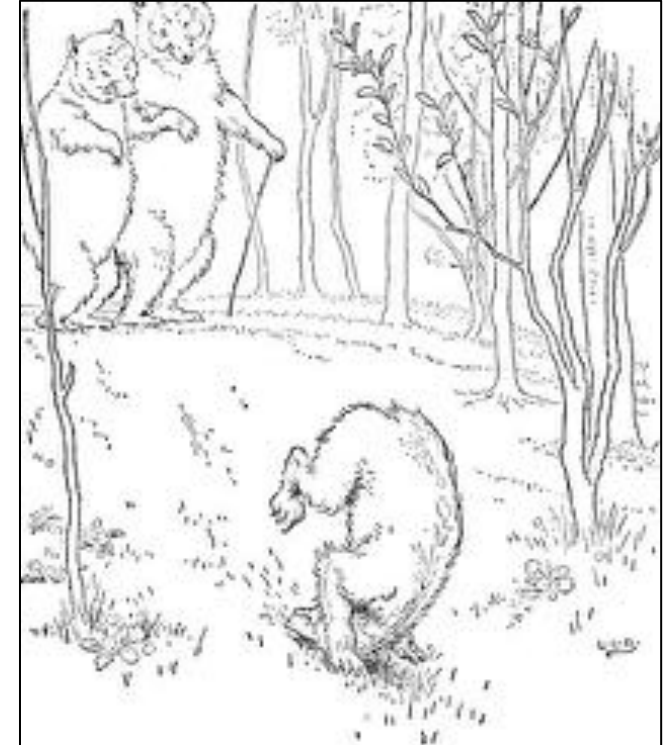
How to Create a Retelling Story Wheel

1. Cut a large circle shape.
2. On one side, divide it evenly into 6 segments.
3. Write the title in the middle, or on the other side of the circle.
4. Identify 6 important events in the story.
5. In each section, draw a simple image for each event.

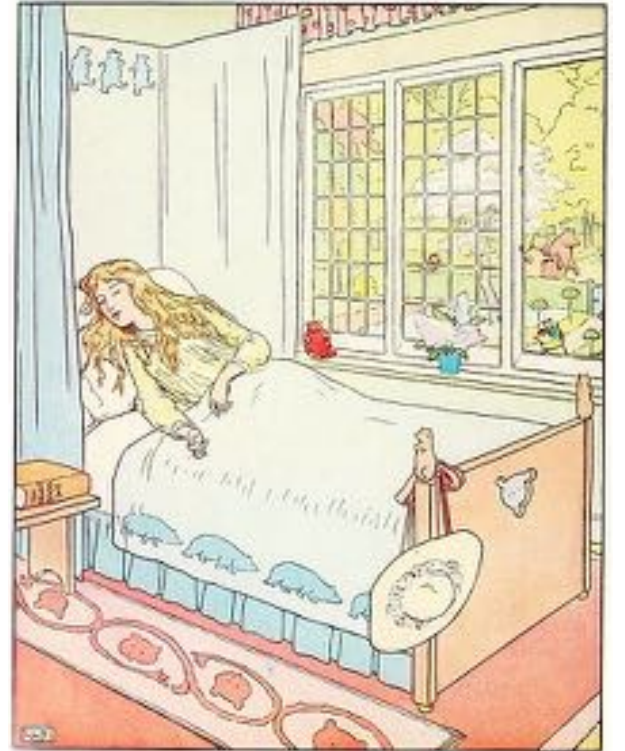


Kate, Let's try it!

Goldilocks & the 3 Bears



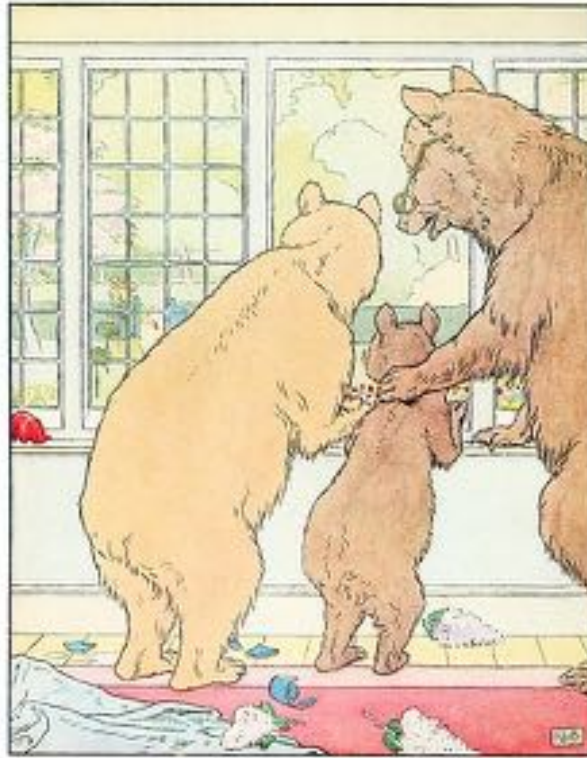
Goldilocks & the 3 Bears



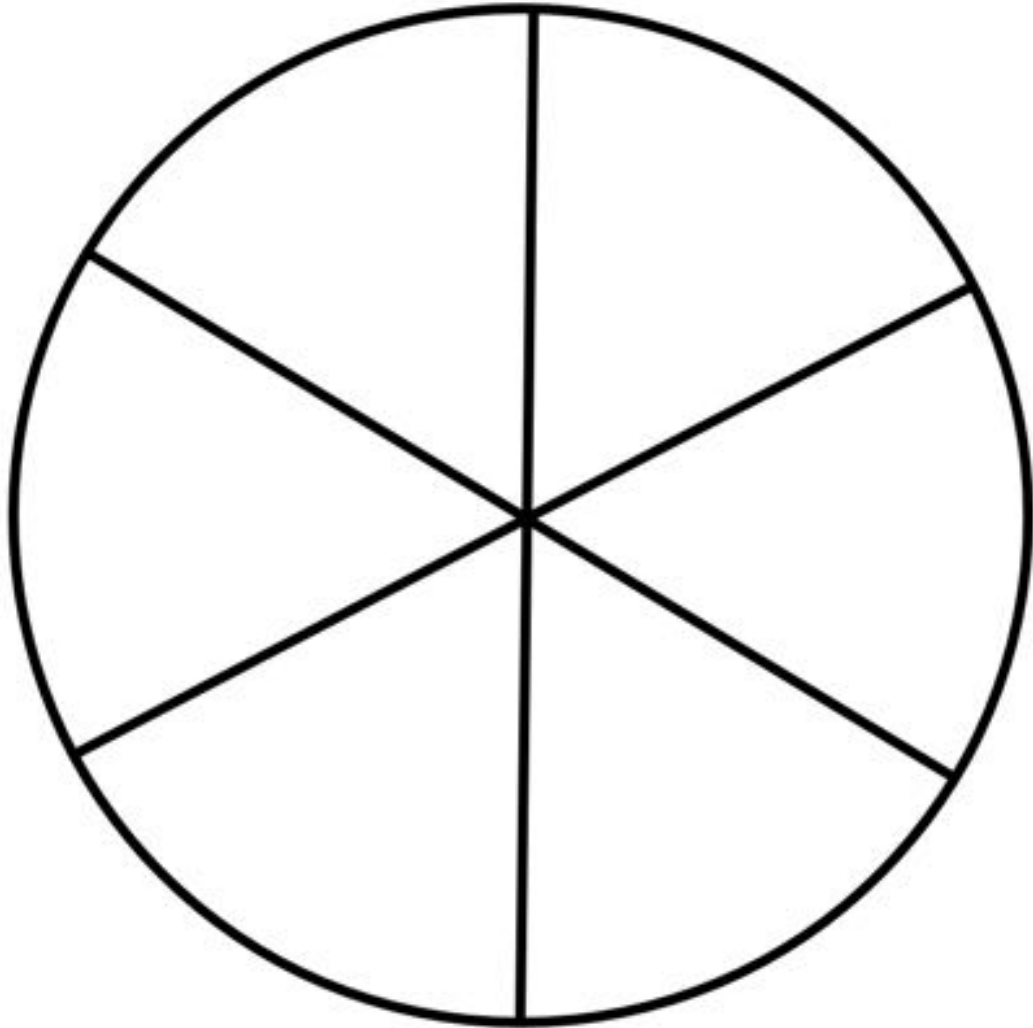
Goldilocks & the 3 Bears



Goldilocks & the 3 Bears



Goldilocks & the 3 Bears Story Wheel

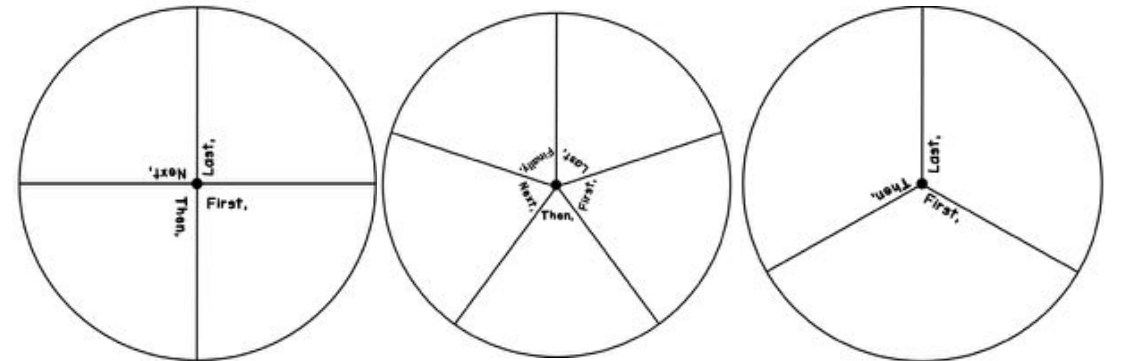


Why I Like the Story Wheel

- A resource that requires minimal technical resources
- Learning process can be routinized for students
- Many ways to adapt for different language learning needs and text types
- Students can take ownership and use it as an independent learning strategy
- Opportunities to practice story language

Adaptation ideas

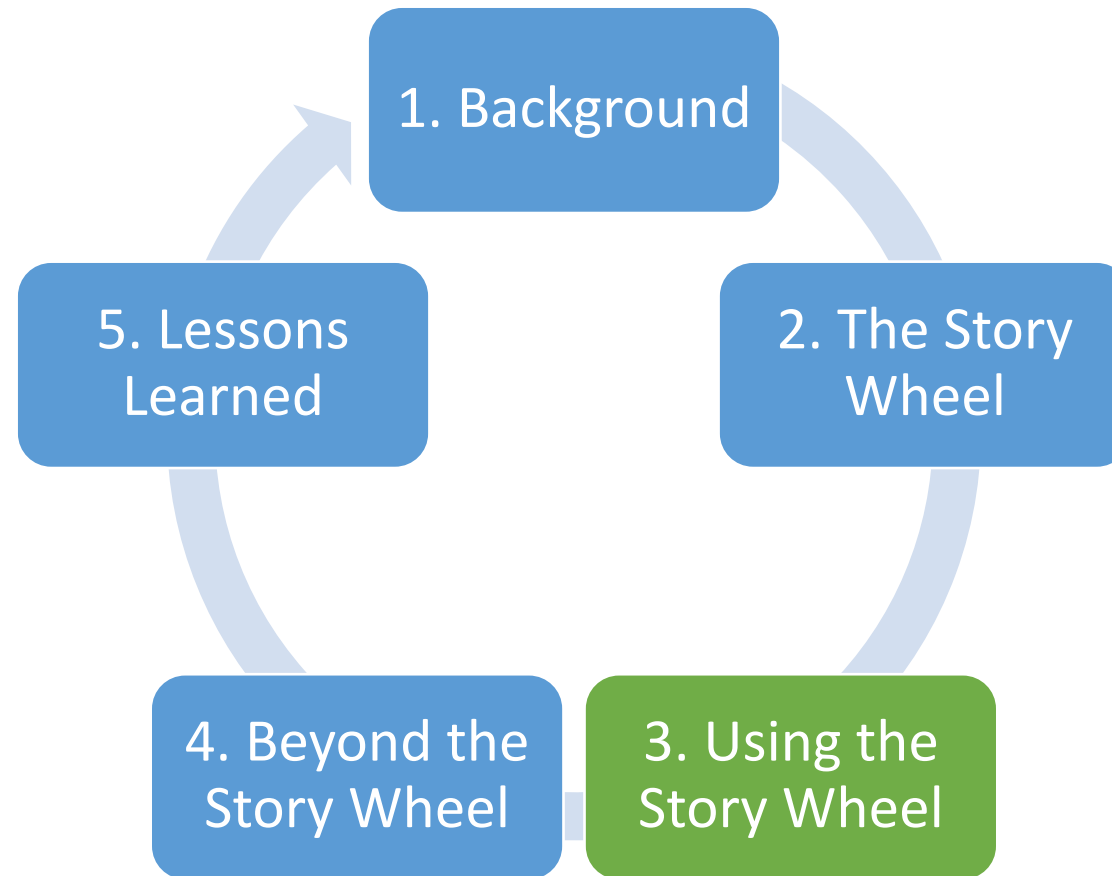
- Create a different number of events
- Write transition words in each space (*first, then*).
- Indicate the starting place with a #1 or a star.
Use arrows to show direction.
- Make photocopies of the images rather than drawing them.
- Use PowerPoint to create a story slide deck instead for online classrooms.





How could you use this story wheel with your students?

Part 3 – Using the Retelling Story Wheel



How to Use the Story Wheel in the Classroom: 3 Steps

1. Read story
interactively
with students



2. Model how
to use the story
wheel



3. Give students
practice
opportunities

First: Interactive Reading



What does “interactive reading” mean to you?

First: Interactive Reading

Remember the pre-during-post reading phases?



- Preview vocabulary
- Predict about the story plot
- Read in chunks
- Short comprehension checks
- Ask and answer open-ended questions as you read

Second: Model Story Wheel Use

- Devote time for modeling when introducing the story wheel
- Demonstrate step-by-step
- Use language you expect students to use
- Check for student understanding as you model
- Try a “Think-aloud”

Think-aloud: To verbalize your thoughts out loud as they occur to you while you do a task (such as reading or retelling)

Modeling the Retelling Story Wheel

Think-aloud Example:

*I will start here because there is a number 1.
I see a picture of the three bears all together. This reminds me of the beginning when they decided to leave their house and take a walk. I know stories start with "once upon a time," so I'm going to start with that...*



Third: Give Practice Opportunities

- Shared whole-class experience
- Student pairs or small groups
- Independent practice
- “Anchor activity” for when students finish other tasks
- Take home activities

Kate, Let's try it!



Online Adaptations

- Teacher models retelling first part of story wheel and makes voice recording for students to reference
- Students retell in break out rooms on Zoom
- Students record themselves and upload their retelling on an application such as FlipGrid

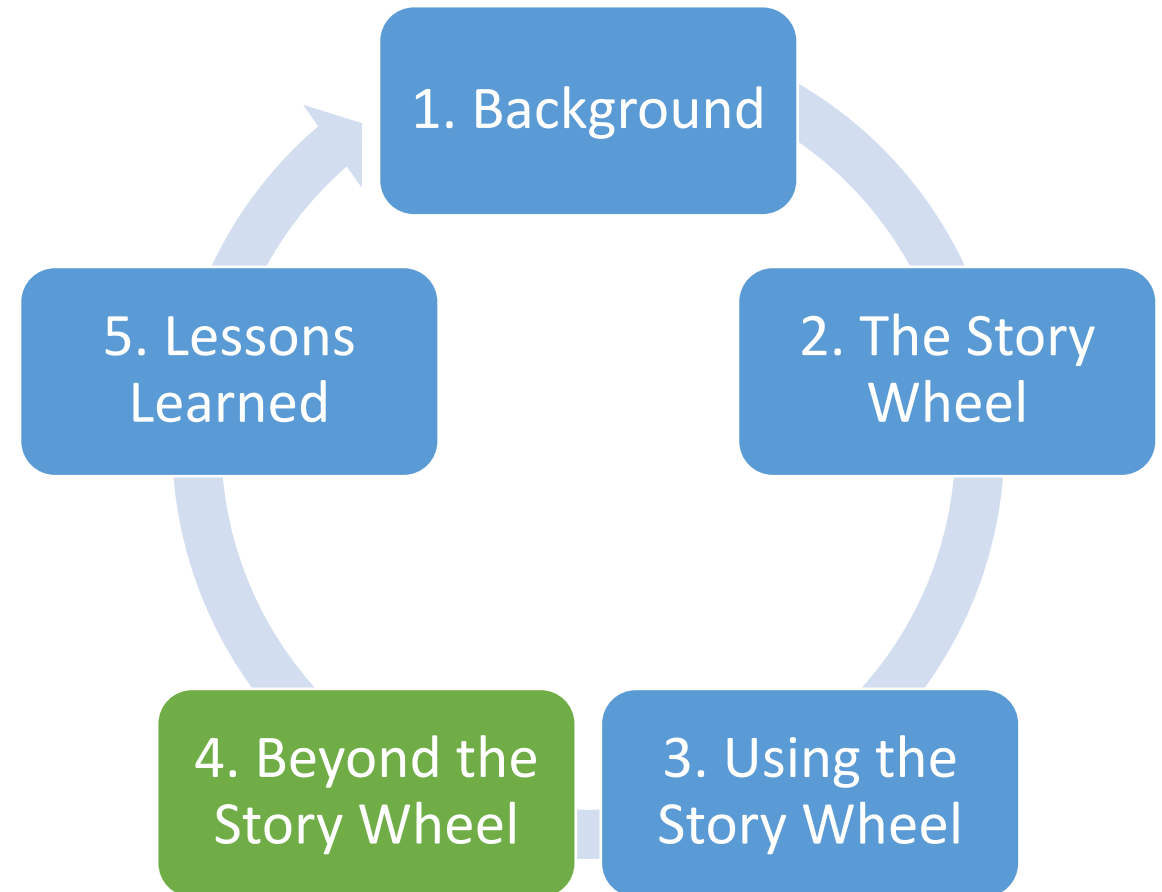




**How can students use the story wheel in
online classrooms?**

Part 4 – Beyond the story wheel: 3 Ways to use the retelling story wheel in your classroom

- a) Students create the wheel
- b) Use the wheel to assess language use
- c) Think “outside the *wheel*”





**How can
students be
involved in making
the story wheel?**

(a) Students create the wheel by...

- Coloring images
- Adding words to speech bubbles
- Sequencing images for events
- Drawing their own images for events
- Identifying the key events and then drawing images
- Writing phrases, words, or symbols to represent events

(b) Use the wheel to assess language use

Story wheel could be used as a formative assessment for language output. For example, in Goldilocks:

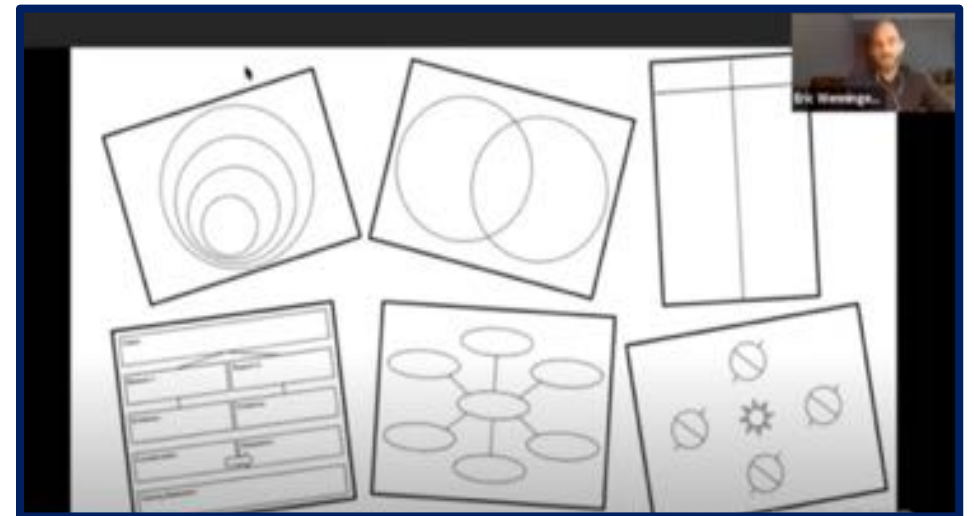
- ✓ Story language: *once upon a time, happily ever after*
- ✓ Adjective order: *great big bear*
- ✓ Sequencing words: *First, then, finally*
- ✓ Descriptive vocabulary: *peeped* in the door
- ✓ Verb tenses: *Somebody has been sleeping*
- ✓ Fluency and intonation

(c) Think outside the wheel

- Don't have scissors? Use paper folding ("foldables").
- Want to get students moving? Try a story walk around the room.
- Focusing on story structure? Create a story map graphic organizer.

Check out AE Live 4.4 – “Using Graphic Organizers to Promote Students’ Academic Language Production”

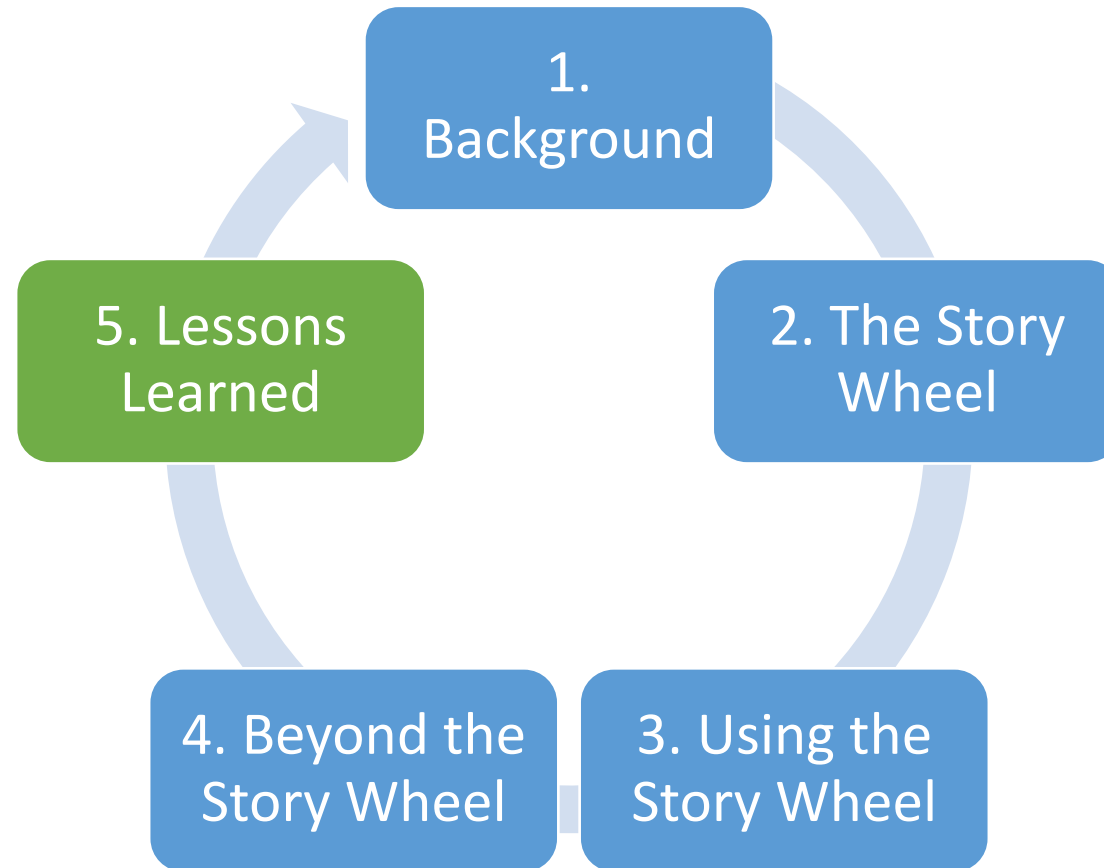
<https://openenglishcommunity.org/page/series-4>





**Which of these ideas will you use
in your classroom? Why?**

Part 5 – Lessons Learned



Lessons Learned

Don't skip the *pre-read* and *during-read*.

Select the right texts: we retell stories, not informational texts.

Do not focus too much on the artwork.

Remove the story wheel... eventually.

A Final Note about *English Teaching Forum*



LOTTIE BAKER
United States

Using Story Retelling Wheels with Young Learners

“What was the book about?” “Can you tell me what happened in the story?” These are questions that I often asked my seven-year-old English learners who were on the cusp of reading and writing in their new language. Occasionally, a student would respond with a detailed account of the events in the story, but more often than not, my questions were met with a shoulder shrug or a blank stare. My students were astute listeners to storybooks—and a few were even capable of reading the books themselves—but nearly all of them struggled to talk about the stories we read.

As a novice English teacher, I was initially perplexed by my students’ challenge to

who taught young learners in Thailand. The story wheel helped their shy students who



What
is a topic or
strategy that
could be
your FORUM
article?

References

Wenninger, E (2019). AE Live webinar - Using graphic organizers to promote students' academic language production. [video: 1:04:09]; accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCxAWVCiMZw>

Baker, L. (2021). Using story retelling wheels with young learners. English Teaching Forum, 59(3), pp. 14-24.
https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/59_3_pg14-24.pdf

Unless otherwise noted, all images in this presentation are the author's own or are "no-attribution required" under the [Pixabay simplified license](#) or the [Unsplash license](#).

Thank you!

Questions or concerns?

Email: americanenglishwebinars@fhi360.org

AE Live Webinar Resource Center

<https://openenglishcommunity.org/page/american-english-webinar-series/>

AE website: americanenglish.state.gov

AE YouTube channel: youtube.com/StateAmericanEnglish

AE for Educators Facebook page: facebook.com/AmericanEnglishforEducators

AE Facebook page: facebook.com/AmericanEnglishatState



Reflection Questions

1. What kinds of post-reading activities do you currently use in class? Did you get any new ideas from the webinar that you might incorporate into your post-reading routines?
2. How might you adapt the story wheel approach to meet your students' needs? What support might you need to provide to enable students to successfully use a story wheel in a retelling activity?
3. Which stories or texts in your existing curricula might work well with the story wheel approach?



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

